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FEB. 1984
NO. 1
NATHANIEL
DUSK
PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR™

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons™ Video Game

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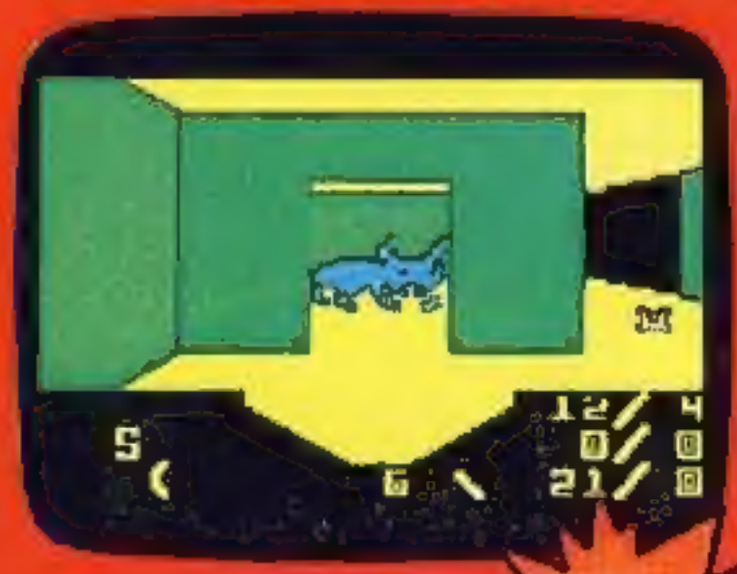

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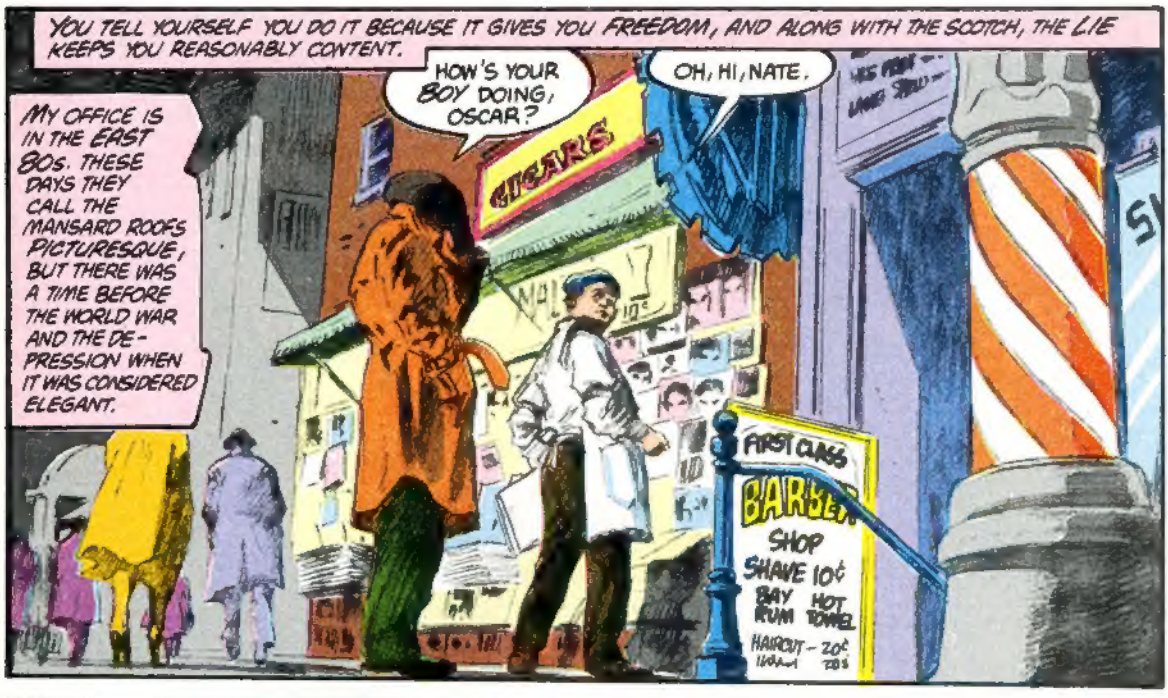
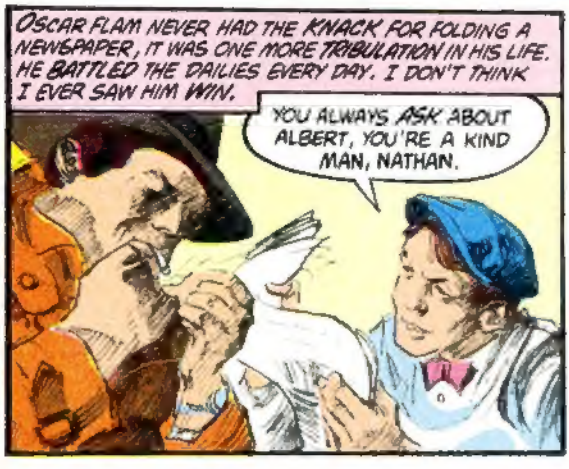
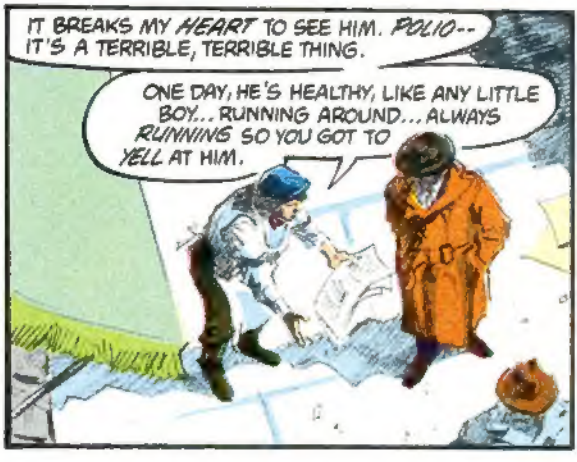
I DON'T NEED A LOT OF CASH FOR SURVIVAL, JUST ENOUGH TO KEEP THE OFFICE BOTTLE OF SCOTCH IN SUPPLY. I KEEP IT IN THE LOWER RIGHT HAND DESK DRAWER.
LOVERS DIE AT DUSK
HEY, CADAVER! IT'S THE PRIVATE DICK... DUSK! I GOT HIM ALL LINED UP IN MY SIGHTS!
BANG!
IF YOU CAN'T MAKE IT ON THE POLICE FORCE, YOU CAN DECIDE TO BE A PRIVATE DETECTIVE. IT'S NOT THE WISEST DECISION, BUT WHAT THE HELL.
2


YOU TELL YOURSELF YOU DO IT BECAUSE IT GIVES YOU FREEDOM, AND ALONG WITH THE SCOTCH, THE LIE KEEPS YOU REASONABLY CONTENT.
MY OFFICE IS IN THE EAST 80s. THESE DAYS THEY CALL THE MANSARD ROOFS PICTURESQUE, BUT THERE WAS A TIME BEFORE THE WORLD WAR AND THE DEPRESSION WHEN IT WAS CONSIDERED ELEGANT.
HOW'S YOUR BOY DOING, OSCAR?
OH, HI, NATE.
CIGARS
FIRST CLASS
BARBER
SHOP
SHAVE 10¢
BAY RUM HOT TOWEL
HAIRCUT – 20¢


OSCAR FLAM NEVER HAD THE KNACK FOR FOLDING A NEWSPAPER, IT WAS ONE MORE TRIBULATION IN HIS LIFE. HE BATTLED THE DAILIES EVERY DAY. I DON'T THINK I EVER SAW HIM WIN.
YOU ALWAYS ASK ABOUT ALBERT, YOU'RE A KIND MAN, NATHAN.


IT BREAKS MY HEART TO SEE HIM. POLIO-- IT'S A TERRIBLE, TERRIBLE THING.
ONE DAY, HE'S HEALTHY, LIKE ANY LITTLE BOY... RUNNING AROUND... ALWAYS RUNNING SO YOU GOT TO YELL AT HIM.

AND NOW HIS LEGS--DOCTOR SAYS NEVER AGAIN... HE WON'T WALK NO MORE. THE WIFE, I KNOW I TOLD YOU THIS, I KNOW YOU'RE BORED LISTENING TO IT, BUT I THINK SHE BLAMES ALBERT'S SICKNESS ON ME...

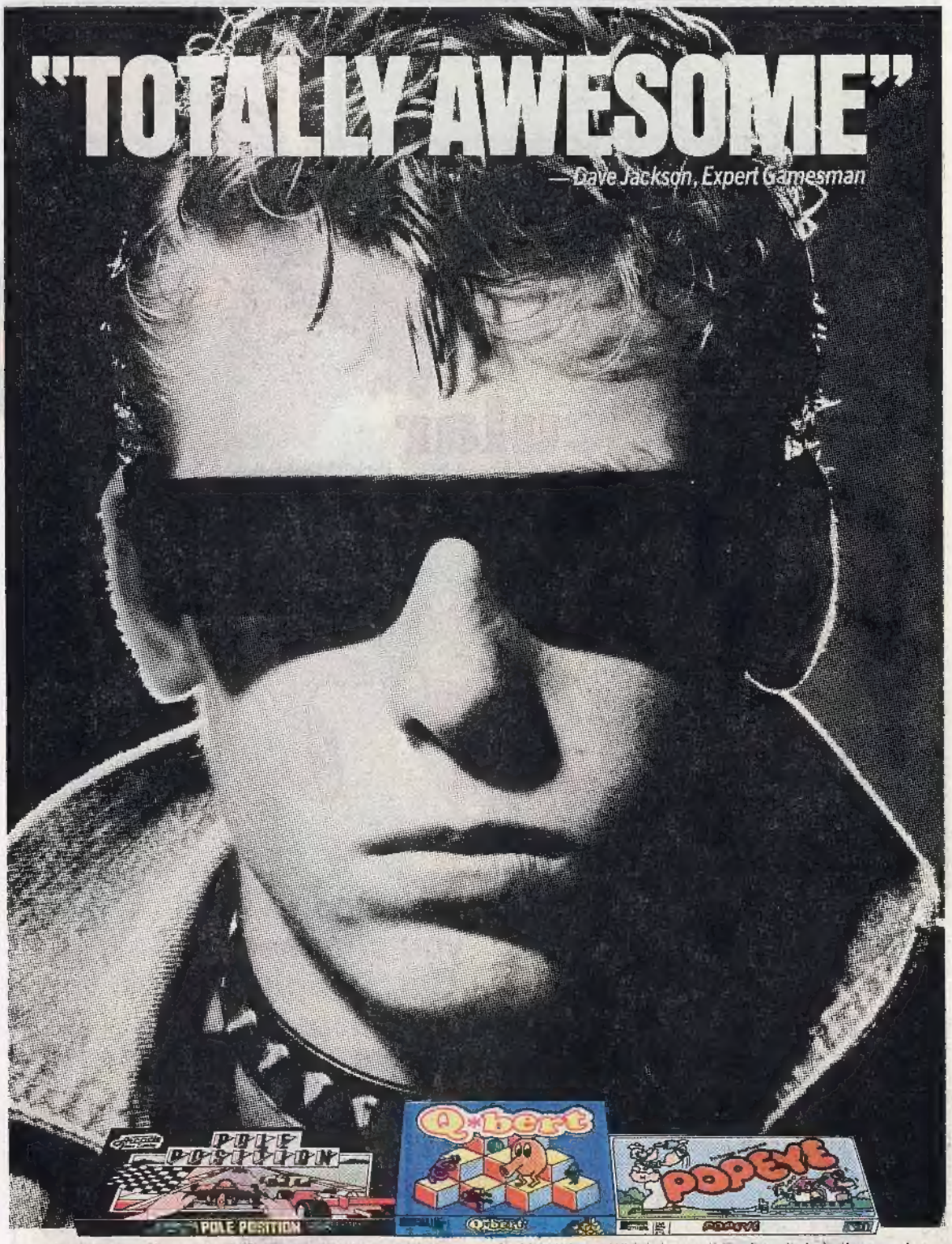
--LIKE SHE CAN'T YELL AT HIM NO MORE, SO SHE YELLS AT ME.
YOU HANDLE IT AS WELL AS A MAN CAN, OSCAR.

SOMETIMES THINGS GET BETTER. MAYBE THEY'LL BREAK THAT WAY FOR YOU. I HOPE IT DOES.
3

HMM.
DAILY MIRR
TAXI DRIVER
THREATEN STRIKE
SHE WAS WAITING FOR ME. MRS. GRANT MORRISON, A TRANSPLANTED MIDWESTERN WOMAN...
NATHANIEL
PRIVATE
INVESTIGA
...WHO WANTED TO FIND OUT IF HER HUSBAND WAS AN ADULTERER.
YOU TOOK YOUR SWEET TIME, MR. DUSK, I'VE BEEN COOLING MY HEELS FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES!
THE PHOTO LAB WAS LATE. TAKE IT OUT ON THEM.
HER EYES DENIED THE POSSIBILITY, BUT SHE ALREADY KNEW THE REAL ANSWER. HUSBANDS OR WIVES, IT DOESN'T MATTER, THEY ALL WANT THE SAME THING. THEY WANT YOU TO TELL THEM THEY HAVEN'T BEEN DECEIVED.
SHE LOOKED AT THE PICTURES WITH COLD, CRUEL EYES. I HAD JUST BEEN MIDWIFE TO A LITTLE MORE HATE IN THE WORLD.
THE SONOFABITCH! THAT VILE LOWLIFE!
4

"TOTALLY AWESOME"

—Dave Jackson, Expert Gamesman



"After I spend 5 hours and 40 quarters playing 'Popeye,' 'Q*bert,' and 'Pole Position' in the arcades, I split for home. And not to watch some dork show on TV, either. I play more games.

"I've got the new Parker Brothers Arcade Series. They help sharpen my strategies. Plus I can play them with all my friends. And beat them. Which is one thing I can't do in the arcades.

"So get serious and pick up one of Parker Brothers' Arcade Series board games. Nothing is more totally awesome. Except me."

PARKER BROTHERS

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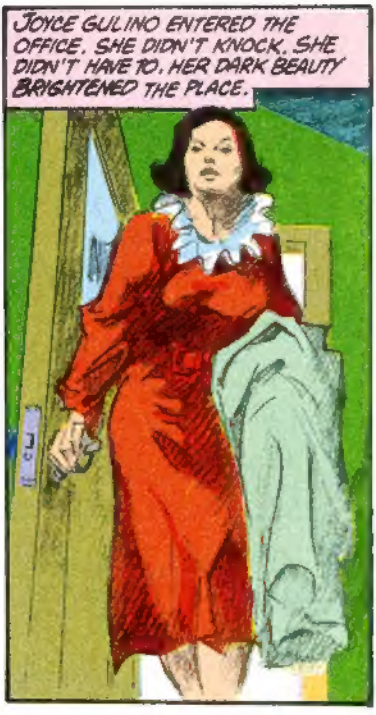
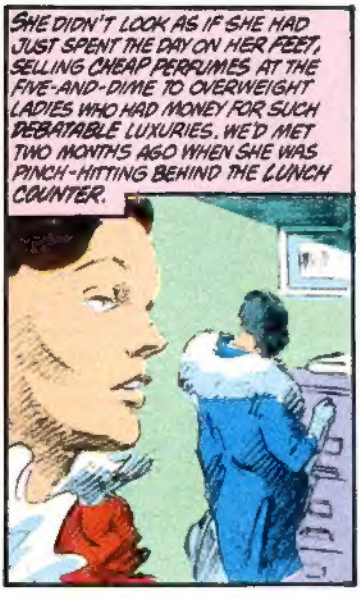
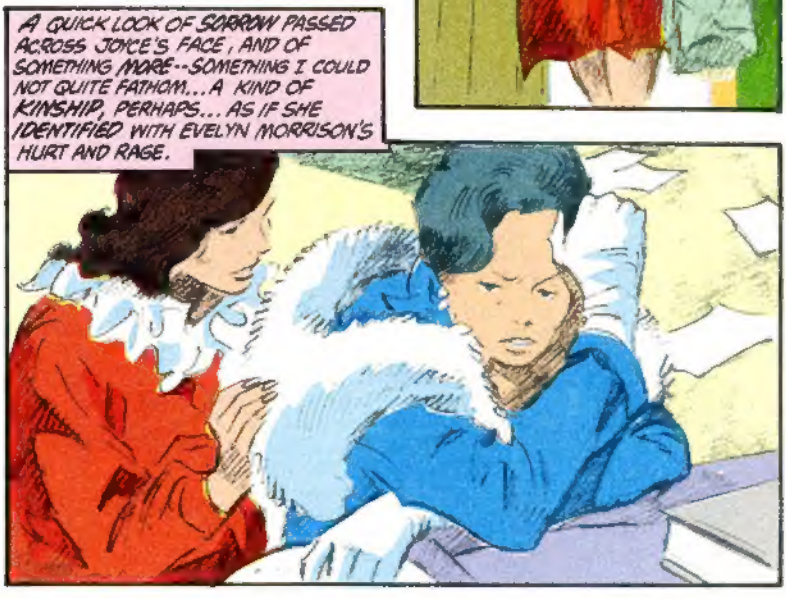
THIS WAS A HELLUVA WAY TO PRESERVE MY INTEGRITY, I THOUGHT, FEEDING GUILTY HUSBANDS AND WIVES TO THE RUINS OF MATRIMONIAL OATHS.
HOW COULD HE?

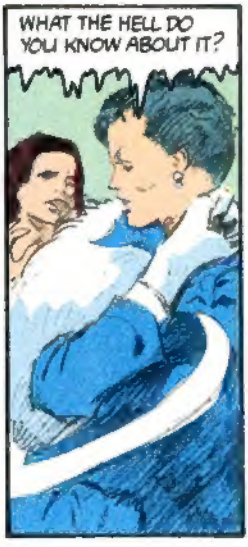
SHE LOOKED LIKE SHE MIGHT LOSE BREAKFAST AND LUNCH.
IF YOU BREAK THE FURNITURE, MRS. MORRISON, IT DOESN'T CHANGE ANY-THING. IT ONLY GETS ADDED ON THE BILL.
SMASH


JOYCE GULINO ENTERED THE OFFICE. SHE DIDN'T KNOCK. SHE DIDN'T HAVE TO. HER DARK BEAUTY BRIGHTENED THE PLACE.


SHE DIDN'T LOOK AS IF SHE HAD JUST SPENT THE DAY ON HER FEET, SELLING CHEAP PERFUMES AT THE FIVE-AND-DIME TO OVERWEIGHT LADIES WHO HAD MONEY FOR SUCH DEBATABLE LUXURIES. WE'D MET TWO MONTHS AGO WHEN SHE WAS PINCH-HITTING BEHIND THE LUNCH COUNTER.


A QUICK LOOK OF SORROW PASSED ACROSS JOYCE'S FACE, AND OF SOMETHING MORE--SOMETHING I COULD NOT QUITE FATHOM... A KIND OF KINSHIP, PERHAPS... AS IF SHE IDENTIFIED WITH EVELYN MORRISON'S HURT AND RAGE.

PERHAPS YOU HAD TO BE A PART OF THE FEMALE SORORITY TO BE A PART OF IT. I SUDDENLY FELT LIKE AN OUTSIDER.
YOU CAN SURVIVE THIS. IT MIGHT NOT SEEM LIKE IT, RIGHT THIS MINUTE. BUT YOU CAN GET PAST THIS.


WHAT THE HELL DO YOU KNOW ABOUT IT?

HERE'S YOUR FEE, MR. DUSK. YOU CAN BE SURE I'LL GIVE YOU MY HIGHEST RECOMMENDATIONS TO MY FRIENDS.
5

NATHANIEL QUISK
PRIVATE
INVESTIGATION
SLAMM

YOU MUST REALLY HAVE SOME PLEASANT DAYS, YOU HAVE TO FACE PEOPLE LIKE THAT VERY OFTEN?
MORE THAN I LIKE.

WHY DO THIS... THIS...
SORDID, THAT THE WORD YOU'RE LOOKING FOR?

"I TRIED THE POLICE FORCE, JOYCE. I WAS ON MY WAY. IT'S HARD TO GET FIRED ONCE YOU'RE ON THE INSIDE. BUT I SAW TOO MANY POOR JOES ROUSTED.. BOOKED... AND THE KEY THROWN AWAY, BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH JACK TO BUY THE LAW.

"YOU STAND THERE AND WATCH THEIR BLOOD DRIP ONTO THE LINOLEUM. DROP BY DROP IT FALLS...

BLIP

"SOMETIMES YOU WANT TO SAY: THIS IS NOT THE WAY TO DO IT! SOMETIMES YOU WANT TO STOP IT!

"IT'S NOT THE POLITICALLY ADVANTAGEOUS THING TO DO."

THE POLICE PROTECT US, NATHAN. IT'S AN HONORABLE PROFESSION.

IT CAN BE. IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE.

"YOU BELIEVE IT IF YOU WANT. I'VE SEEN TOO MANY DEALS MADE... TOO MUCH MONEY PASSED UNDER THE TABLE.

"THERE'S A LOW PERCENTAGE OF MEN WHO ARE BAD COPS... BUT ENOUGH THAT MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME TO PRETEND THEY DIDN'T EXIST.

HELL! I'VE GOT INTEGRITY. SO I UPPED AND QUIT THE FORCE, IN 19 HUNDRED AND 31. NOT THE BEST TIME TO WALK OUT ON A JOB.

I'D SAY NOT. THOSE WERE THE DARKEST DAYS. EVEN PRESIDENT HOOVER GAVE UP. BUT NOT F.D.R.

NOPE. F.D.R. WASN'T AFRAID. CAME INTO OFFICE SWINGING. WHAT WAS IT HE SAID, "WE HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR BUT FEAR ITSELF"? IS THAT IT?

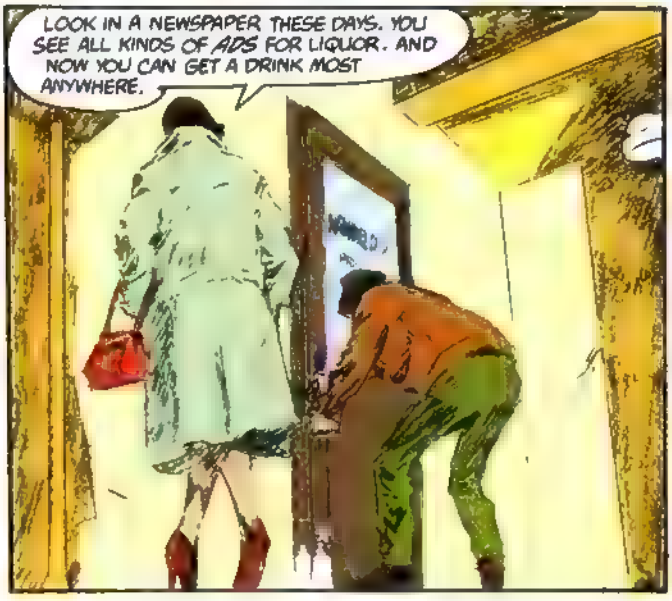
CLOSE ENOUGH.

YOU KNOW WHAT MY FEAR WAS, JOYCE?
NO. WHAT?

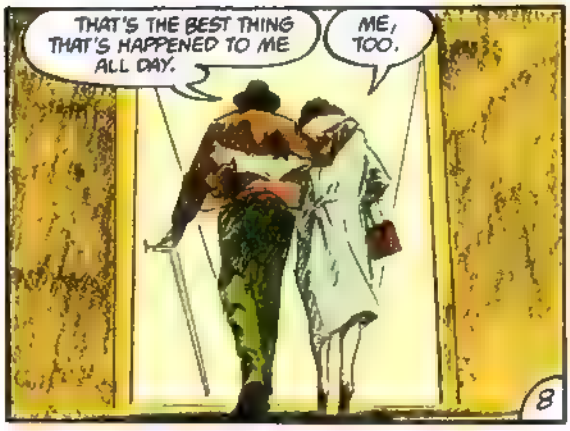
THAT SOME DAY I'D LOSE CONTROL WHEN SOME LOCAL POLITICO BIG WIG PULLED THE STRINGS ON COPS I FIGURED SOME DAY I'D HIT ONE OF THE SHYSTERS.' THEN THEY'D TAKE THE BADGE... GUN... SO I QUIT. NOW, I DO THIS... AND I TELL MYSELF IT'S MORE HONEST.

COME ON LET'S GO GET A DRINK.

I CAN'T QUITE GET USED TO THE REPEAL.


LOOK IN A NEWSPAPER THESE DAYS. YOU SEE ALL KINDS OF ADS FOR LIQUOR. AND NOW YOU CAN GET A DRINK MOST ANYWHERE.

PROHIBITION HAS ENDED, MY DEAR.


THAT'S THE BEST THING THAT'S HAPPENED TO ME ALL DAY.
ME, TOO.

POWER LORDS

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Out there, in the deepest reaches of space, looms a craggy chunk of age-old granite...the mighty Volcan Rock, now held by some of the most deadly aliens. It is up to you to activate all the anti-alien weapons and devices.

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Certainly you're one of them...

PROBE 2000
series

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HEY, NATE! WHO'S THE LITTLE LADY?
JOYCE GULINO, THIS IS FREDDIE BICKENHACKER. HE SWEARS THAT'S HIS REAL NAME BELIEVE IT OR NOT, HE WAS ONCE A MILLIONNAIRE.
I WAS A REGULAR WOLF OF WALL STREET, MA'AM... NOTE THE "WAS."
I HATE THIS SITTIN' AROUND, WAITIN'-- I'D RATHER EMPTY THIS CHAMBER, GET IT OVER WITH.
YOU, CADAVER... YOU DON'T CARE... YOU'RE A CORPSE... WHAT THE HELL DOES WAITIN' AROUND MEAN TO YOU?
I WAS ONE'VE THOSE BIG SHOTS LOST HIS COCONUTS IN THE CRASH. YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN ME. A REAL ARROW COLLAR GUY. OTHER GUYS JUMPED OUT THE WINDOWS. THEY LOST IT ALL, THEY SMASHED THEIR BRAINS IN... ME... I'M PHILOSOPHICAL.
HEY! IT'S ONLY MONEY! I CAN SHINE SHOES. I CAN STILL SEE A PRETTY WOMAN LIKE YOU. THE OTHERS... HEY! THEY'RE DEAD AND BURIED!
AND HE'S WORKING ON HIS SECOND MILLION-- SEE YOU AFTER, FREDDIE.
9

I'D LOVE TO GO TO THE ASTOR THIS WEEK. GARBO'S SUPPOSED TO BE SO GLAMOROUS IN QUEEN CHRISTINA... BUT MY BUDGET JUST WON'T SPRING FOR THE MOVIES.
I'M GOING TO HAVE TROUBLE ENOUGH BRINGING SOME FRUIT INTO THE HOUSE THIS WEEK.
THUMP
WELL, LISTEN, THAT MORRISON WOMAN BACK THERE PAID ME FOR GIVING HER BAD NEWS... SO MAYBE YOU CAN GET YOUR LANDLADY TO TAKE CARE'VE THE KIDS, AND ON THE WEEKEND WE'LL GO SEE IT.
I HATE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE. MRS. IANOTTI IS A PEACH. SHE TAKES CARE OF BOTH JENNIE AND ANTHONY WHEN THEY COME HOME FROM SCHOOL UNTIL I GET HOME FROM WORK.

I'M SURE SHE WON'T THINK YOU'RE TAKING ADVANTAGE.
OOFF
NO KIDDING, JOYCE, I THOUGHT I HAD THE MARKET ON GOING MY OWN WAY... BUT YOU MAKE ME LOOK LIKE A PICKPOCKET AT GRAND CENTRAL STATION.
WOULD YOU PUH-LESE GET OUT OF MY WAY, YOU CLUMSY OOF!
JOYCE?
JOYCE GULINO? IT IS YOU!
I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU, WHAT'S IT BEEN? MUST BE FOUR TO FIVE YEARS NOW. YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED A BIT.
ARTHUR? ARTHUR SQUIRE?
YEAH, ME, IN THE FLESH! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE IN THE BIG CITY? I THOUGHT YOU WERE OUT--
11

YOU HAVEN'T SPOKEN TO ANY OF THE *OLD ACQUAINTANCES?*

AS *SELDOM* AS I CAN. THEY SPEAK *ONE* LANGUAGE, I SPEAK *ANOTHER.*

ME TOO.

I'M NATHANIEL DUSK.

OH, SORRY, NATE. THIS IS ARTHUR SQUIRE. HE PUBLISHES *MAGAZINES.*

SMALL TIME STUFF. WE PRINT *RIP-OFFS* OF THE SHADOW AND DOC SAVAGE!

WELL, LISTEN, GANG, I'VE GOTTA BE ON MY *WAY!* GIVE ME A *CALL*, JOYCE. I'M IN THE PHONE BOOK! 'BYE, FELLA!

MOVE IT QUICK!

RIGHT AWAY, RIGHT AWAY.

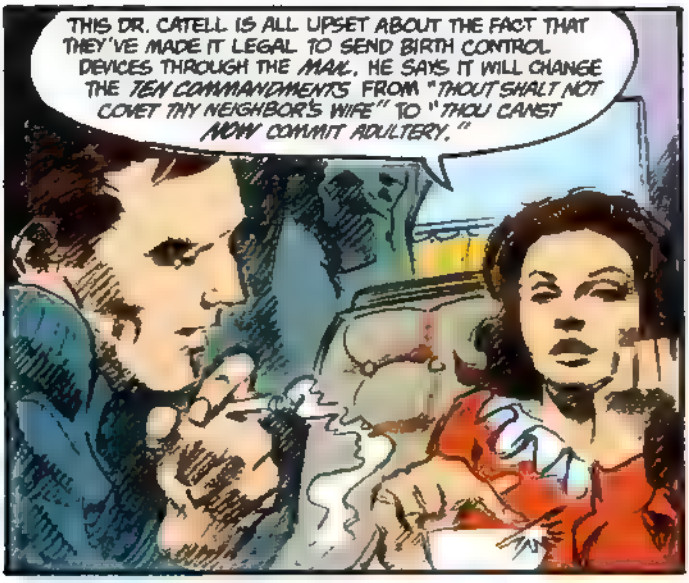
YOU *CAUGHT UP* WITH ME, HUH? WELL, WHYN'T YOU STAY WITH THE HEAP? I'LL GO INSIDE AN' KEEP AN EYE ON THEM *LOVEBIRDS.*

BAR

YOU KNOW WHAT I READ IN THE TIMES, HONEY?

NO KIDDING! THERE'S THIS DR. CATELL OF PHILADELPHIA... IT FIGURES HE'D COME FROM PHILLY...

CAFE BAR


THIS DR. CATELL IS ALL UPSET ABOUT THE FACT THAT THEY'VE MADE IT LEGAL TO SEND BIRTH CONTROL DEVICES THROUGH THE MAIL. HE SAYS IT WILL CHANGE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS FROM "THOUT SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOR'S WIFE" TO "THOU CANST NOW COMMIT ADULTERY."

WHAT DOES HE THINK? NOT HAVING A CONTRACEPTIVE BINDS A WIFE TO HER HUSBAND? ISN'T THAT THE SILLIEST THING YOU'VE EVER HEARD? WHAT WOULD PEOPLE LIKE YOU AND ME DO IF WE DIDN'T HAVE... WELL... YOU KNOW?
NO-- WHAT?

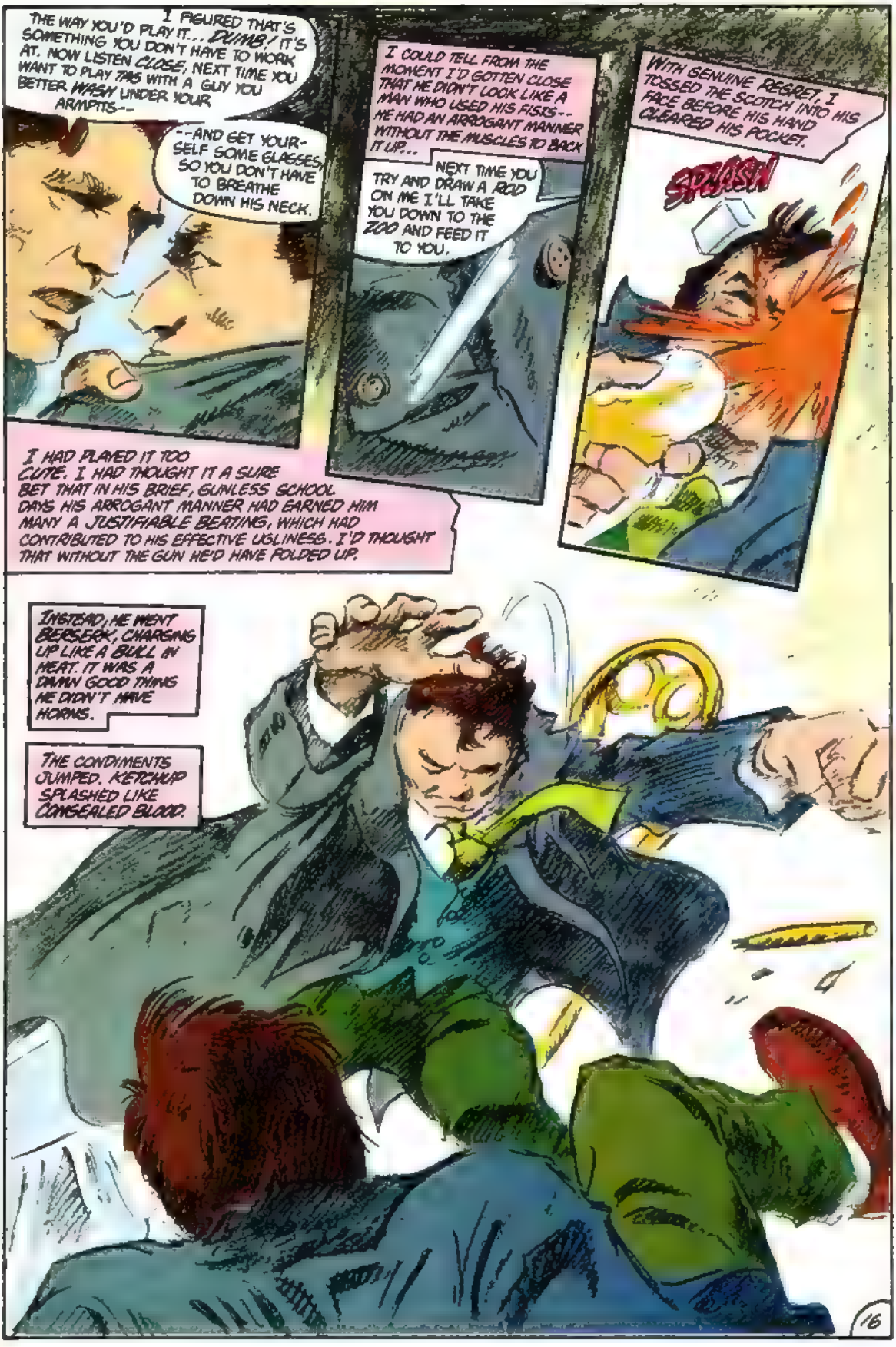
YOU'RE BEING A STINKER! YOU KNOW WHAT I MEAN... PROTECTION.
WELL, YOU KNOW, IN SOME CIRCLES, WHAT WE DO IS FROWNED UPON ALL BY ITSELF.

OH, YES. I THOUGHT LIKE THAT ONCE, TOO. BUT THEY'RE WRONG! WHAT WE DO IS MARVELOUS-- AND IT'S -- IT'S INHUMAN TO THINK IT ISN'T!

YOU KNOW, JOYCE -- YOU HAVE ME TALKING ABOUT ME ALL THE TIME... WHAT IT WAS LIKE WHEN I WAS OVER IN FRANCE DURING THE WAR... WHAT HAPPENED TO ME WHILE I WAS ON THE FORCE -- BUT I DON'T HEAR ABOUT YOUR PAST. WHY IS THAT?
13

THIS SQUIRE GUY IS THE FIRST PERSON I'VE MET OUTSIDE 'VE YOUR KIDS AND LANDLADY.
I HAVEN'T LIVED AS INTERESTING A LIFE AS YOU, THAT'S ALL, NATE. MY HUSBAND'S DEAD. MY PARENTS ARE DEAD. I LIVE WITH MY KIDS...
I LIVE IN THE PRESENT. THE PAST IS GONE... WITH ITS ILLUSIONS... ITS LIES...
I'M NO LONGER A LITTLE GIRL GOING TO CATECHISM. I'VE GOT TWO KIDS TO FEED, AND I DO IT THE BEST I CAN, WHICH ISN'T GOOD ENOUGH...
--BUT MONEY'S A LIE, TOO, AND IT CAN KILL EVERYTHING INSIDE YOU IF YOU DON'T REALIZE IT!
A NON-MATERIALISTIC WOMAN. JOYCE, YOU ARE THE DAMNDEST WOMAN I'VE EVER MET.
I HOPE THAT'S A COMPLIMENT.
IT IS.
19

EXCUSE ME A MOMENT, JOYCE. THAT'S THE THIRD TIME TODAY I'VE SEEN THAT UGLY FACE.
SHUSH, NATHAN! HE'LL HEAR YOU!
IT'S NOT NICE... BUT HONEST... UGLY IS STILL UGLY... AND I THINK HE'S BEEN TRYING TO HEAR EVERYTHING WE'VE SAID, NONE TO SURREPTITIOUSLY.
menu
FINEST FOOD
YOU KNOW, IF I DIDN'T KNOW FOR A FACT THAT I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU BEFORE TODAY, I'D SWEAR WE WERE OLD BUDDIES.
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKIN' ABOUT?
I'M TALKING ABOUT YOU. AND THAT YOU BETTER HAVE A REAL GOOD REASON FOR FOLLOWING ME AROUND TODAY.
I AIN'T FOLLOWIN' NOBODY, SMART MOUTH!
15


I FIGURED THAT'S THE WAY YOU'D PLAY IT... DUMB! IT'S SOMETHING YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORK AT. NOW LISTEN CLOSE, NEXT TIME YOU WANT TO PLAY TAG WITH A GUY YOU BETTER WASH UNDER YOUR ARMPITS--
--AND GET YOURSELF SOME GLASSES, SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO BREATHE DOWN HIS NECK.
I COULD TELL FROM THE MOMENT I'D GOTTEN CLOSE THAT HE DIDN'T LOOK LIKE A MAN WHO USED HIS FISTS-- HE HAD AN ARROGANT MANNER WITHOUT THE MUSCLES TO BACK IT UP...
NEXT TIME YOU TRY AND DRAW A BEAD ON ME I'LL TAKE YOU DOWN TO THE ZOO AND FEED IT TO YOU.
WITH GENUINE REGRET, I TOSSED THE SCOTCH INTO HIS FACE BEFORE HIS HAND CLEARED HIS POCKET.
SPLASH
I HAD PLAYED IT TOO CUTE. I HAD THOUGHT IT A SURE BET THAT IN HIS BRIEF, GUNLESS SCHOOL DAYS HIS ARROGANT MANNER HAD EARNED HIM MANY A JUSTIFIABLE BEATING, WHICH HAD CONTRIBUTED TO HIS EFFECTIVE UGLINESS. I'D THOUGHT THAT WITHOUT THE GUN HE'D HAVE FOLDED UP.
INSTEAD, HE WENT BERSERK, CHARGING UP LIKE A BULL IN HEAT. IT WAS A DAMN GOOD THING HE DIDN'T HAVE HORNS.
THE CONDIMENTS JUMPED. KETCHUP SPLASHED LIKE CONGEALED BLOOD.

I HIT A NEARBY TABLE WITH THE BACK OF MY HEAD. I FELT SPAGHETTI KISSING THE NAPE OF MY NECK. IT FELT LIKE WARM-BLOODED WORMS.
CRAASSHH
HIS FIST HIT BENEATH MY LEFT EYE LIKE A SLEDGE-HAMMER. THE BONE BENEATH MY FLESH MADE A SOUND OF CRACKING ROCK. HE WAS TRYING TO KILL ME!
KRUNCH
I WEDGED MY FOOT UNDER HIS SOFT GUT AND FELT IT SINK INTO THE FLESH. HIS WEIGHT MADE MY LEG TREMBLE. I WAS AFRAID I WASN'T GOING TO BE ABLE TO LIFT HIM.
HE HIT ME AGAIN, AND THE SHARP STABBING PAIN RIPPED THROUGH MY HEAD LIKE A LIGHTNING BOLT. IT CONVINCED ME I'D BETTER BE ABLE TO LIFT HIM.
SOCK

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Columbia MUSCLE FRAME RACERS

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Pro-Am HP2 Dual Caliper quick-release brakes, 2 finger levers Elina saddle pillow-block stem

Pro-Am HP4 Coaster & rear caliper brakes. 2-piece cushion grips.

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3. Complete this coupon and send it along with your dated sales receipt and $2.00 for postage and handling to: COLUMBIA RACING TEAM SHIRT OFFER, One Cycle Street, Westfield, MA 01085. Your order must be postmarked no later than January 31, 1984. Allow 4 weeks for delivery.

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NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

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☐ Large ☐ X-Large

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HE WENT THROUGH THE WINDOW LIKE A BIG, AWKWARD BIRD WHOSE WINGS HAD FORGOTTEN THE TRICK OF FLIGHT. EVERY TIME I TOOK A BREATH, THE PAIN CAME ALIVE BEHIND MY EYES. IT SCARED ME A BIT, IT MADE ME WONDER IF ANYTHING WAS BLEEDING INTERNALLY. THE PAIN ALSO MADE ME ANGRIER.

SMAASSHH

I HELD MY ARM, TIGHTLY. I WAS SURE THAT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO KEEP IT IN ONE PIECE. IT HURT SO DAMN MUCH EVEN THE MUSCLES IN MY STOMACH TIGHTENED WITH THE PAIN. THE PAIN WAS FOREMOST IN MY MIND, BUT BEHIND IT, I WAS TRYING TO FIGURE WHAT THIS WAS ALL ABOUT.

I'D BEEN A GOOD BOY. I HADN'T BEEN POKING MY NOSE AROUND ANYWHERE IT COULD GET BITTEN OFF.

SO WHY WAS I BEING FOLLOWED BY GUYS WITH SUCH HEAVY ARTILLERY?

LT. MURRAY ABRAHAMS ALWAYS LOOKED AS IF HE NEEDED A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP. HE WAS AN HONEST MAN, AND HE KEPT THE HONESTY IN A JOB THAT MADE SUCH THINGS DIFFICULT. HE COULD STAY WITH THE FORCE.

LOOK... WHAT I WANNA KNOW... WHO'S GONNA PAY FOR THE WINDOW. THAT'S THE IMPORTANT THING. I MEAN, YOU GUYS GOT ANY IDEA WHAT A WINDOW LIKE THIS COSTS?

JOYCE, THIS IS LT. MURRAY ABRAHAMS. ABRAHAMS... JOYCE GULINO.

I KNOW ABRAHAMS FROM THE FORCE. HE WAS ONE OF MY *BIGGEST BOOSTERS.*

NICE TO MEETCHA. PARDON ME FOR MENTIONING IT, BUT YOU SHOULD *CHOOSE* THE COMPANY YOU KEEP MORE CAREFULLY.

SO WHAT'S ALL THIS *TA-DO* ABOUT?

GOT ME.

SOME *FLUNKIE* WAS FOLLOWING ME AROUND TODAY. WHEN I CALLED HIM ON IT, HE WENT OFF LIKE A *MOLOTOV COCKTAIL!*

SURE, SURE. THEY FOLLOWED YOU AROUND BECAUSE THEY DON'T LIKE THE SCENT OF YOUR COLOGNE.

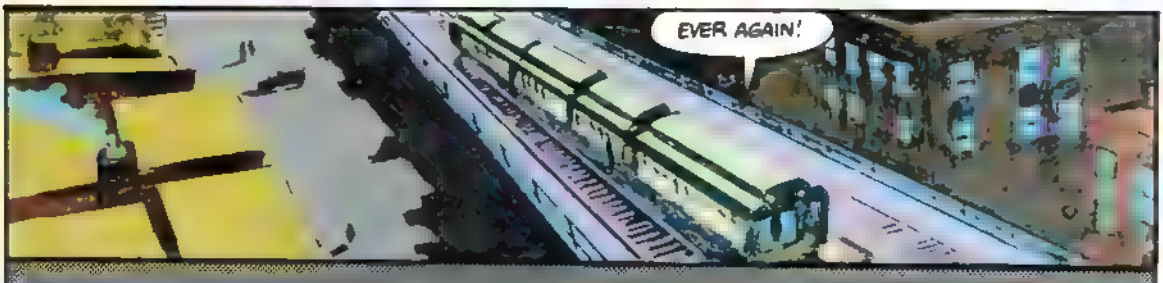
NEXT TIME, MAYBE THEY DON'T MISS... MAYBE YOU'LL BE SORRY YOU'RE PLAYING *RING-AROUND-THE-ROSY* WITH ME. SO WHAT'TA YOU THINK? THINK IT'LL SNOW?

THERE WAS A LOOK IN JOYCE'S EYES THAT SAID SHE HAD BEEN BEYOND THE SMILES. IT WAS A *WEARY* LOOK, AS GREY AS MIST, AND I THOUGHT THIS MUST HAVE BEEN HOW SHE LOOKED WHEN THEY BURIED HER HUSBAND. BUT BEHIND THE WEARINESS WAS *ANGER*, THREATENING TO ERUPT.

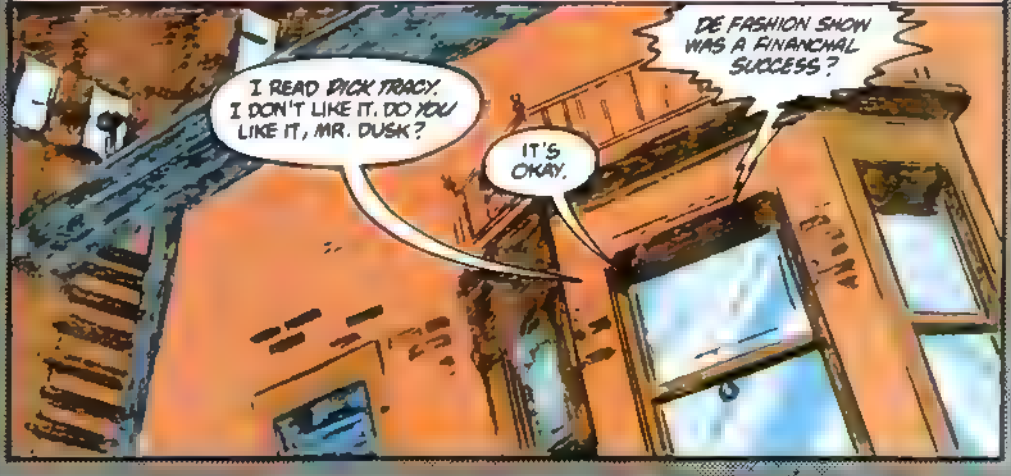
WHAT THE HELL IS IT WITH MEN, ANYHOW? THEY'VE ALWAYS GOT TO *SOLVE* THINGS WITH THEIR FISTS!

THE MAN TRIED TO DRAW A SLAY ON ME, JOYCE. I WASN'T TRYING TO SOLVE OR PROVE ANYTHING.
I THINK YOU WERE GOADING HIM INTO DOING SOMETHING LIKE THAT... AND NOW YOU'RE MAKING EXCUSES!

MEN ALWAYS HAVE EXCUSES! THEY HAD TO DO THIS! THEY HAD TO DO THAT! "YOU WON'T UNDERSTAND SUCH THINGS! YOU'RE A WOMAN!"
I'VE HEARD ALL THE LAME, DUMB-HEADED EXCUSES IN THE WORLD



WE DIDN'T TALK OR TOUCH MUCH ON THE RIDE HOME. I ARGUED WITH HER IN MY HEAD. I TOLD HER SHE WAS UNREASONABLE. MY FACE HURT WORSE THAN MY ARM NOW. I WANTED SYMPATHY AND SOFT KISSES, NOT HOSTILITY. SHE PICKED UP HER KIDS, JENNIE AND ANTHONY BY SEVEN. THE SMELL OF MULLIGAN STEW AND THE VOICES OF AMOS AND ANDY HAD TAKEN OVER HER APARTMENT.



OH, YEH, IT WAS GREAT ALL RIGHT...
YOU WERE A POLICEMAN, WEREN'T YOU?
UHHH... YEAH... FOR AWHILE.
MADE CLOSE TO A HUNDRED DOLLARS FO' DE LODGE...
WAS IT LIKE DICK TRACY, BEING A COP?
NOT MUCH.
...AN' WE IS DONE PAID OUR RENT WID DAT...
HEY! DID YOU KNOW THOSE GUYS ARE WHITE?
...AN' LIGHT BILL AN' PHONE BILL...
WHAT GUYS?
ON THE RADIO. THE GUYS WHO DO THE VOICES FOR AMOS AND ANDY.
...ALL DE UTILITIES.
NOT SO!
IT'S TRUE.
YASSUH, THAT'S GOOD.
OKAY, CALM DOWN. SOUR'S ON!
IS NOT! IS NOT!
THE MULLIGAN STEW WAS HOT AND TASTY; CARROTS AND POTATOES AND A FEW CHUNKS OF MEAT FLOATING IN THICK GRAVY. MY BODY COULDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY SUCH GOOD FOOD WAS COMING DOWN TO IT THESE PAST TWO MONTHS. I LISTENED TO THE BEDTIME ROUTINES, THE CLOCK ON THE WALL, THE RESTLESS SOUND OF THE CITY BEYOND THE WINDOWS. IT FELT ODD TO BE IN THE MIDST OF A FAMILY.
YOU TWO BE QUIET NOW. I DON'T WANT TO HEAR A SOUND BUT SNORING.

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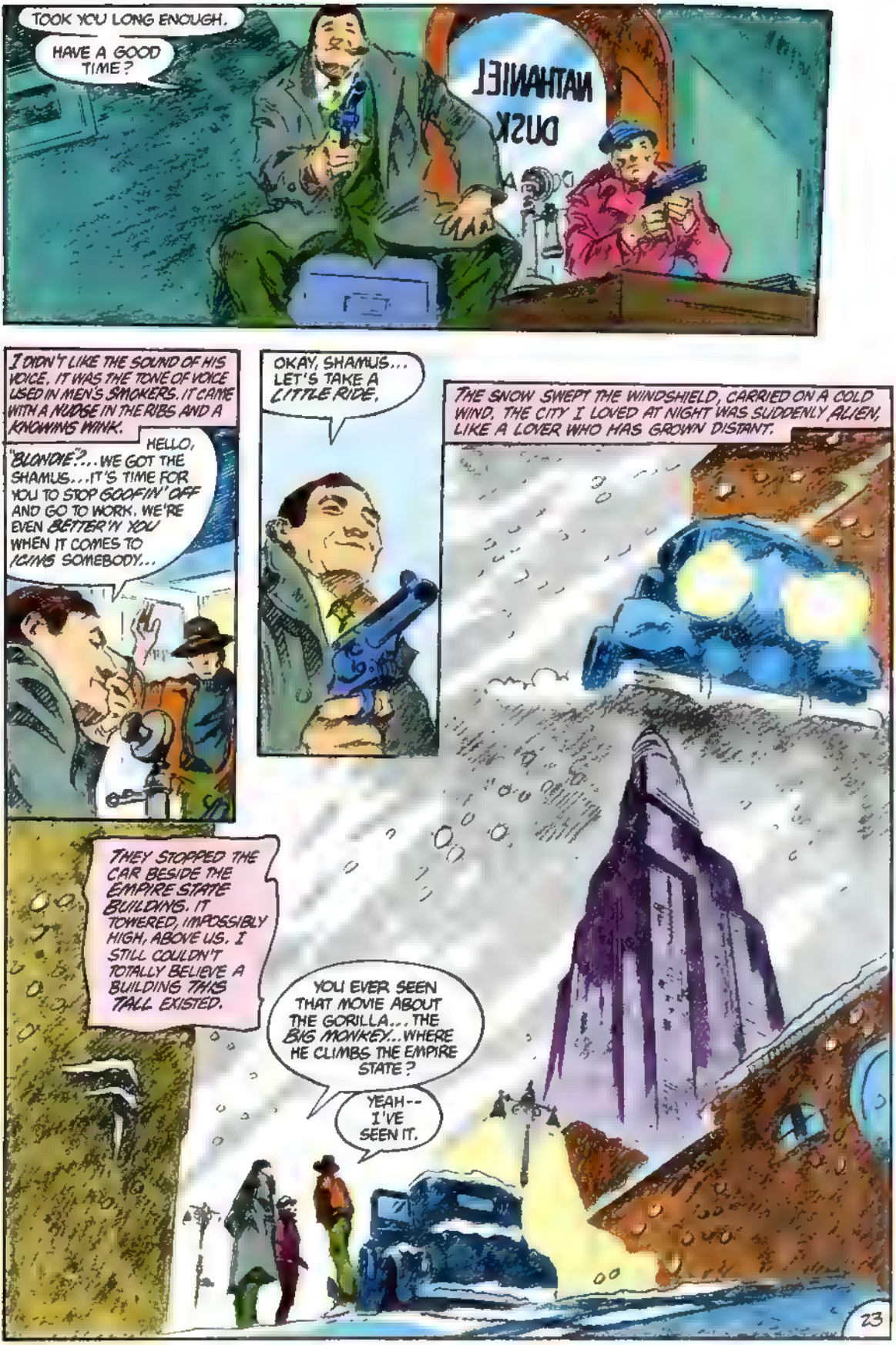
HER MOOD HAD CHANGED. WHATEVER HAD BEEN BOTHERING HER, SHE HAD COME TO TERMS WITH IT. BUT THERE WAS STILL SOME DARK HURT DEEP IN HER EYES. IT CROSSED MY MIND THAT WHAT WE WERE TALKING ABOUT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH WHAT WE WERE REALLY TALKING ABOUT.
I'M SORRY, NATHAN. I SHOULDN'T HAVE TAKEN EVERYTHING OUT ON YOU. IT'S JUST...OH, EVERYTHING TODAY... WORK... THAT WOMAN AT YOUR OFFICE...
WHAT WAS IT WITH YOU AND HER ANYWAY? YOU GOT VERY INVOLVED IN WHAT WAS GOING ON RIGHT OFF.
YOU SAW HER, HON. ALL THAT HURT AND GUILT. IT TURNS SO EASILY TO HATE...
I DON'T WANT TO DISAPPOINT YOU, BUT I'VE SEEN A LOT OF CLIENTS WHO COULDN'T CARE LESS...EXCEPT FOR HOW THEY'RE GOING TO PROFIT FROM INFIDELITY.
OH SURE, THERE ARE THOSE, THE ONES WHO DIDN'T CARE ABOUT THE MARRIAGE... IT'S THE ONES WHO CARED... IT DOES TERRIBLE THINGS, TO.
CLICK
THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT TO BELIEVE IN ANYMORE...ALL THEIR FAIRY-TALES HAVE GONE ;POOF!: TURNED TO PUMPKINS AT MIDNIGHT!
YOU SPEAKIN' FIRST HAND?
OH NO, I DON'T WANT TO BE TOO RISQUE HERE...BUT COME TO BED, NATE!
I STROLLED BACK TO THE OFFICE. I COULD HAVE STAYED THE NIGHT, BUT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN AWKWARD FOR BOTH JOYCE AND ME, HAVING TO FACE THE KIDS IN THE MORNING. I LOVE THIS CITY AT NIGHT. IT'S QUIETER THEN THE DAY, BUT STILL ALIVE.
AT NIGHT, IT'S EASY TO FORGET THAT THERE ARE TIMES WHEN THIS CITY DOESN'T HAVE A HEART.
BARGAINS
BICYCLES
ITS HEARTBEAT IS IN THE LIGHTS AND SHADOWS, ITS PULSE IS IN THE TAXI HORNS AND PASSING VOICES.
LIKE A PASSIONATE PHANTOM, THE SMELL AND TASTE OF JOYCE STAYED WITH ME. I WAS DWELLING ON THE THOUGHT, PLEASANTLY, WHICH IS PROBABLY WHY I DIDN'T SENSE MY VISITORS...
PRI
22


TOOK YOU LONG ENOUGH.
HAVE A GOOD TIME?
NATHANIEL DUSK
I DIDN'T LIKE THE SOUND OF HIS VOICE. IT WAS THE TONE OF VOICE USED IN MEN'S SMOKERS. IT CAME WITH A NUDGE IN THE RIBS AND A KNOWING WINK.
HELLO, "BLONDIE"?... WE GOT THE SHAMUS... IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO STOP GOOFIN' OFF AND GO TO WORK. WE'RE EVEN BETTER'N YOU WHEN IT COMES TO ICING SOMEBODY...
OKAY, SHAMUS... LET'S TAKE A LITTLE RIDE.
THE SNOW SWEPT THE WINDSHIELD, CARRIED ON A COLD WIND. THE CITY I LOVED AT NIGHT WAS SUDDENLY ALIEN, LIKE A LOVER WHO HAS GROWN DISTANT.
THEY STOPPED THE CAR BESIDE THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING. IT TOWERED, IMPOSSIBLY HIGH, ABOVE US. I STILL COULDN'T TOTALLY BELIEVE A BUILDING THIS TALL EXISTED.
YOU EVER SEEN THAT MOVIE ABOUT THE GORILLA... THE BIG MONKEY... WHERE HE CLIMBS THE EMPIRE STATE?
YEAH-- I'VE SEEN IT.

MAYBE YOU TOOK THE SKIRT WITH YOU, HUH?
WHAT SKIRT?
THE LITTLE WHORE YOU BEEN SPENDING THE NIGHT WITH. SHE'S THE BEAUTY, DON'T YOU GET IT YET? THE BEAUTY WHAT KILLED THE BEAST!
WE WALKED OUT ONTO THE LEDGE. THE WIND TUGGED AT US, INSISTENTLY. THE SNOW MELTED ON OUR FACES. I HAD NEVER BEEN THIS HIGH UP AND NOT BEEN IN AN AIRPLANE. AN IMMENSE FEELING OF VERTIGO CAUGHT IN MY THROAT, STOMACH AND BOWELS.
YOU'RE GOING OVER THE SIDE, DICK-- JUST LIKE THE MONKEY!
I TRIED NOT TO SIGNAL MY MOVE. I CAME UP AND BACK WITH MY FIST, HOPING TO CATCH HIS NOSE OR HIS MOUTH. I GOT LUCKY AND CAUGHT HIM IN THE THROAT.
SOCK
MY LUCK FLED TO THE NIGHT SKIES. THE DULL SOUND OF THE GUN WHACKING INTO MY CHEEK AND DIGGING FOR BONE FILLED MY HEAD.
KING KONG DIED A BLOODLESS DEATH-- I DIDN'T THINK I WOULD!

ON FREELANCING AND PRIVATE EYES

A Journey from the 1980s to the 1930s

by Don McGregor

L-1481

TO BE HONEST, I never thought I'd be writing this book, *Nathaniel Dusk*, for DC comics.

Oh, I'd known since the 1970s that one day I would be chronicling his adventures. For several years I'd had one scene written concerning Dusk. It was tucked in a manila envelope and every once in awhile I'd come across it and nod and murmur, "One of these days, Nate, we're going to get down to it. We are going to take a long, hard look at that scene and figure out how the hell you got there and where you went afterwards."

I'd first begun thinking about Dusk when I was actively involved in creating another period detective called Alexander Risk. As a character Risk is as about as close to Dusk as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes is to Raymond Chandler's Philip Marlowe. In other words, except that they are both saddled with the label *private detective*, they have nothing in common.

During the long search for Alexander's name, when I was making up lists and wandering along Brooklyn sidewalks, talking out loud to get the sound of different name combinations, I'd been toying with the names Sebastian and Nathaniel. But when, at last, I'd come up with the name Risk, neither seemed to fit him. Alexander sounded right.

Sebastian was left in limbo. But Nathaniel... well, that sounded quite nice with another name on my list: *Dusk*.

I'd first researched the 1930s in 1971 for a character that was orginally intended for Warren magazines and eventually appeared at Marvel, a Sherlockian disciple called Hodiah Twist. Since I was no longer writing *Hodiah Twist*, I wanted another series I could place in that desperate time. I kept thinking of the way Dashiel Hammett and Raymond Chandler crystallized and almost institutionalized the hard-boiled private eye of those times. I thought it would be exciting to place the essentially lone detective in the New York City environment of the '30s.

Dusk was on his way to being born, but it was a long way from conception to birth. Much longer than nine months.

I first worked with Gene Colan when we were both at Marvel Comics. Few people remember that he illustrated an issue of *Killraven*, and that later we worked together on a '30s period piece for the second *Hodiah Twist* story.

I love working with Gene. Anytime people see his pencilled pages they are amazed at how fluid, how graceful they are. The man paints with a pencil. As a writer, you know you can put two words in a Colan panel, or twenty, and either way, he'll make you look as if it was planned that way from the very beginning.

When I was about to begin a series for a company called Eclipse that concerned small kids growing up in the 1950s, I immediately thought of Gene. It was called *Ragamuffins*. By its very nature, this series needed a graphic naturalism, not

the cartoony cuteness that is traditionally associated with strips concerning kids. It was a strip about children for adults. I knew I needed an artist who could capture those kids' faces, get inside them, make them flesh and blood, make the reader care about their triumphs and hurts, who could capture their pettiness, their cruelty, but also their innocence. Gene Colan has that exquisite naturalism. When I see his art on *Ragamuffins*, I know he understands those kids as well as I do.

I told editor Dean Mullaney, my close friend and fellow private eye lover, that if Gene couldn't illustrate *Ragamuffins*, I didn't want to do it. We had a few complications with Gene handling the strip, until he began to work for DC. At last! We were going to get *Ragamuffins* under way. I was elated.

During one of the early phone calls about *Ragamuffins*, I mentioned Nathaniel Dusk to Gene and read the one scene I had written about Dusk to him. Gene loved it. He is as big a fan of old films, especially of private eyes, as I am. I told him, "One of these days, we'll do it. It's a strip I'll save for you."

But I still didn't think we'd be doing it for DC. I thought maybe one of the alternative publishers would take the chance.

In the fall of 1982, Gene gave me a call and said I should go in to the DC offices and talk with Dick Giordano. I'd only met Dick a couple of times before, and then only briefly, in the midst of some comic book convention or party. But work was very slow at the time, and every freelancer knows there is no real thing as security in this business. The trap door was under my feet, and someone had slipped a noose about my neck, so I said, "What the hell," and went in to see Dick.

Dick is one of the nicest men in comics. He didn't pay me to say this. He can't pay me not to say it. Most times, when creative people go in to see an editor or publisher, they are treated as if they are going in to the principal's office. Dick never did that. I have never felt so at ease in such a situation.

As we talked, I still wasn't thinking of doing *Nathaniel Dusk* for DC. I mean, I just plain thought they would not be interested.

I happened to mention one of Dick's old series for Charlton comics, a character called Sarge Steel, and we both began discussing our love for private eyes. Now, I swear, it was only in the enthusiasm of the moment that I mentioned this character Nathaniel Dusk, trying to maintain his ideals and integrity during the 1930s. I had no idea Dick would even consider doing a series in the detective genre. To my surprise, Dick said, "Work it up."

I said, "What?"

He said, in that congenial fashion he has that is worth more to DC than money can buy, "Go ahead. Work it up."

And I said, hesitantly, "No, Dick. You don't understand. I mean, this book is going to be handled straight. No trimmings to jazz up the concept. No costumes. Not even a teensy mask over the eyes. No flying dogs with capes."

"Fine," he said, nodding.

I was sure he'd misunderstood. "No, what I mean, Dick, is that this will handle some...you know, *adult* material...for instance, there will be some sexual content in the book."

"Right," he said, smiling. "Go work it up."

Now I *knew* he didn't understand. "No, see, what I mean is, Dick..."

He came over to me, put his hand on my shoulder and said, "What are you trying to do, talk yourself out of work?"

I thought about the trap door under my feet. I thought about the noose around my neck.

"You mean, I can do the strip the way I see it, and I can do it with Gene?" I asked. I mean, I was scared of the trap door and the noose, but Dusk would be hell to live with if I didn't do his life right.

"Let's see what you've got," Dick said.

I went home and typed up a twelve-page treatment for Dusk. I was positive when Dick saw it he was going to ask me where the flying dog with the cape was. I was a little bit tense when I went into his office and handed him the treatment. He read it right then and there. He looked up. I decided not to breathe. I decided I could breathe later.

Dick said, "I'd buy this in a minute."

And damned if he didn't get around to buying it! Now it's up to you to prove both of us were right in backing a project like Dusk. If you pick the book up, everybody will say we were geniuses. If you don't, there'll be a lot of folks who'll say, "See, I told you guys. Only super-heroes sell in comics." And it'll probably be a long time before a private eye once again gets to walk the shadowy alleys in the pages of a comic.

As usual, there are a lot of people who help make a book real. I want to thank Pat Bastienne, Alice Schuler, and Alan Gold, who gave me their assistance with kindness and patience.

And as for you, Gene. I love you, man. Let's do it *again!*

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